

ARIZONA STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD
1740 W. ADAMS ST., SUITE 4600, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007
PHONE (602) 364-1 PET (1738) FAX (602) 364-1039
VETBOARD.AZ.GOV

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION FORM

If there is an issue with more than one veterinarian please file a separate Complaint Investigation Form for each veterinarian

RECEIVED

APR 06 2018

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: April 6, 2018

Case Number: 18-97

A. THIS COMPLAINT IS FILED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING:

Name of Veterinarian/CVT: Gregory D. Cromer

Premise Name: Tricity East Vet

Premise Address: 4331 East Broadway

City: Mesa State: AZ Zip Code: 85206

Telephone: 480-924-2470

B. INFORMATION REGARDING THE INDIVIDUAL FILING COMPLAINT*:

Name: Jennifer Hartman

Address: [REDACTED]

City: [REDACTED] State: [REDACTED] Zip Code: [REDACTED]

Home Telephone: None Cell Telephone: [REDACTED]

*STATE LAW REQUIRES WE HAVE TO DISCLOSE YOUR NAME UNLESS WE CAN SHOW THAT DISCLOSURE WILL RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL HARM TO YOU, SOMEONE ELSE OR THE PUBLIC PER A.R.S. § 41-1010. IF YOU HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SUBSTANTIAL HARM WILL RESULT IN DISCLOSURE OF YOUR NAME PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES OF RESTRAINING ORDERS OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION.

C. PATIENT INFORMATION (1):

Name: Bassel
Breed/Species: Boston Terrier
Age: 3 1/2 yrs. Sex: male Color: Black/white & Brindle

PATIENT INFORMATION (2):

Name: _____
Breed/Species: _____
Age: _____ Sex: _____ Color: _____

D. VETERINARIANS WHO HAVE PROVIDED CARE TO THIS PET FOR THIS ISSUE:

Please provide the name, address and phone number for each veterinarian.

Dr. Gregory D. Cromer - Tri City East vet. 4331 E. Broadway
Mesa, AZ 85206 480-830-287
Brown Road Animal Clinic - Dr. Richard Crisler
1140 N. Higley Rd. #107 Mesa, AZ 85205. 480-981-8387

Adobe veterinary clinic - 6454 E. Main St. Mesa, AZ 85205
Dr. Greg Heitman 480-832-2240

E. WITNESS INFORMATION:

Please provide the name, address and phone number of each witness that has direct knowledge regarding this case.

* Dr. Richard Crisler - Brown Road Animal Clinic

* Dr. Greg Heitman - Adobe Veterinary Clinic

* Dutch Ravesloot -

Attestation of Person Requesting Investigation

By signing this form, I declare that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Further, I authorize the release of any and all medical records or information necessary to complete the investigation of this case.

Signature: _____

Jennifer Hartman

Date: _____

4-01-2018

F. ALLEGATIONS and/or CONCERNS:

Please provide all information that you feel is relevant to the complaint. This portion must be either typewritten or clearly printed in ink.

please see attached statement.

Gregory D. Cromer Complaint Statement

December 18, 2017

I took my dog to Tri-City East Veterinary hospital because he was limping. Dr. Gregory Cromer watched my dog walk around the room and said he noticed he was limping. "He's got allergies and he probably licks his paw." I said; "No, he never licks his paw". Dr. Cromer did not do a physical exam on my dog, instead he told me to leave my dog there a few hours so they could bathe him. My dog was also given Triamcinolone Acetomide 10mg/ml and Convenia 80mg/10ml. There was no explanation for all this. I figured Dr. Cromer knew what would help my dog's front paw limping. My boyfriend's credit card was charged \$265.25

My dog seemed no better even tho Dr. Cromer said my dog should show improvement in a few days.

December 26, 2017

I returned to Dr. Cromer because my dog was no better. This time he prescribed Apoquel Tablets 16mg and Ciprofloxacin 250mg and Bene-Bac pet gel 15g and Pill pockets K-9 large 30 ct. My boyfriend's credit card was charged in the amount of \$144.33

December 30, 2017

My dog was taken back to Dr. Cromer who now prescribed Cytopoint injection. The credit card cost was \$154.75 I remember Dr. Cromer making the statement that all dogs suffer allergies. Dr. Cromer also said in a few months I should bring my dog back for another allergy injection.

January 13, 2018

I decided to get another vets opinion. I took my dog to Brown Road Animal Clinic. Dr. Robert Crisler examined my dog and said he thought that he had a torn ligament in the paw that caused him to limp. I let Dr. Crisler tell me this before I told him I had taken my dog to Dr. Cromer. I asked Dr. Crisler if he wanted to know what Dr. Cromer's diagnosis was. He said yes. I said; "allergies" is what Dr. Cromer told me. Dr. Crisler's reply was; "This is not allergies". Dr. Crisler prescribed 10 tablets of Previcox 57mg chews for pain.

March 3, 2018

My dog still had not improved. I decided to take my dog to Adobe Veterinary Clinic. Again, I did not tell the veterinary staff or Dr. of previous diagnosis. Dr. Greg Heitman physically examined my dogs paw. Putting it thru all motions. He pressed on spots that would be of concern in the joint as well as the tip of my dogs paw. My dog never flinched or growled in discomfort. His diagnosis was a possible slight tear in the shoulder area since this limping only occurs when my dog runs to chase the ball. Dr. Heitman and his son both own Boston Terriers, which is the breed of my dog. He also said no blood test was needed since this was not valley fever related. I showed him the papers from Dr. Cromer's office on what was done to my

dog for treatments. He said; "This is definitely not allergies, there are no signs that this dog licks his paw. If this were an allergy problem, the dog would lick all his paws. This is not the case with your dog Bassel.

I feel that Dr. Gregory Cromer knew that this was an injury that would eventually heal on its own and that he knowingly prescribed an allergy treatment plan to make money.

Upon reading previous google reviews it appears that Dr. Cromer has tried similar schemes on other people. I do not want this to happen to anyone else in the future. A full refund is warranted in my case.

Jennifer Hartman
4-01-2018

Narrative of Dr. Gregory Cromer:

December 18, 2017, Bassel, a 3 and 1/2 year old, large, male neutered Boston Terrier was brought into Tri-City East Veterinary Hospital by his owner, Ms. Jennifer Hartman for limping on his right front paw. Twelve days later, on December 30, 2018, Ms. Hartman returned with Bassel for his last visit. He was no longer limping.

After Bassel's last visit there was no further communication from Ms. Hartman.

January 15, 2018, Mr. Phillip Ravesloot, boyfriend of Ms. Hartman, barged into our office. Neither Ms. Hartman or Mr. Ravesloot called or emailed to discuss their concerns. Instead, he loudly made a scene demanding a refund.

At the very beginning of Bassel's exam, I did observe Bassel moving about the exam room. He was favoring his right front paw, still weight bearing, but obviously sore. Ms. Hartman insists that I did not do a Physical Exam. This is simply not true. I assure you, a complete physical exam was performed. Because of his large size, (for a Boston Terrier), my assistant Shane Brockhoff, lifted Bassel onto the table and held him while I performed my exam. I noted porphyrin staining between his toes which lead me to my comment about "paw licking." Palpation of the phalanges, metacarpals and carpals and related joints revealed no pain. Likewise, elbow and shoulder showed full range of motion, I did note that Bassel's right front toes were slightly swollen.

I discussed causes of limping with Ms. Hartman as I continued Bassel's exam. She was not interested in doing x-rays or blood testing for Valley Fever. She asked if we could NOT do diagnostics and instead just try a treatment plan.

Based on my presumptive diagnosis of Atopy, and a pododermatitis secondary to allergies, I put together an estimate for treatment. Ms. Hartman states that no explanation was given for the treatment plan. Again this is simply not true. A full explanation was given by me and again reviewed and explained by Shane. The protocol at Tri-City East Veterinary Hospital is that the treatment plan and estimate is reviewed with the client by the Doctor and again by the veterinary assistant.

Our plan was to give Bassel an injection of a corticosteroid, (Triamcinalone/ Kenalog), to reduce the inflammation and discomfort. As well as an antibiotic, (Convenia), to treat the secondary infection. Additionally, we recommended that Bassel stay for a medicated bath with Malaseb shampoo to soak his feet and give

him some quick relief because of the suspected bacterial pododermatitis.. Ms. Hartman understood that the treatment may take a few hours. She agreed and signed the estimate. Upon discharge, I suggested that Ms. Hartman return to Dr. Hall for a recheck exam. Ms Hartman chose to schedule Bassel's recheck with us.

Six days later, on December 22, 2018, Bassel returned for a recheck. Again, Bassel was examined. My assistant, Josh Neely, lifted Bassel onto the exam table and held while I examined him and spoke with Ms. Hartman. She was concerned that he was still limping and licking his paw. My assessment was that although Bassel was weight bearing, the allergies and secondary infection were not under control. This time I elected to use a non-steroid allergy tablet, Apoquel, and an oral antibiotic, Ciprofloxacin. To protect Bassel's intestinal flora, I also suggested a probiotic, Benebac. Another estimate was prepared. Again as is our protocol at Tri-City East Veterinary Hospital, both Josh and I explained what the estimate for treatment was, and what it would cost. Ms. Hartman signed the estimate and again chose to return to us in a week to check Bassel's progress.

On December 30, 2018, Bassel returned for his follow up visit. He was no longer limping, however his muzzle was hyperemic and his sclera were bilaterally injected. Had Bassel still been limping, I would have reiterated again the importance of doing diagnostics such as x-rays and Valley Fever testing. Since he was no longer limping, I aimed my discussion at longer term management of allergies. I never said that "all dogs suffer from allergies." I did say that many dogs are experiencing allergy symptoms-conjunctivitis, ear infections, excessive licking, hair loss, and secondary infection. We discussed atopic dermatitis immunotherapy-Cytopoint. I did explain that Cytopoint is labeled for use every 4-8 weeks. Again an estimate was prepared. Ms. Hartman agreed and signed the estimate.

In the complaint Ms. Hartman states that she sought out another opinion at Brown Road Animal Clinic. She chose to withhold information, as she admitted in the complaint, from Dr. Crisler regarding Bassel's previous treatments. At no time did Dr. Crisler or Brown Road request medical records. Is it possible that Dr. Crisler did not think Bassel had allergies given that Bassel had been given Cytopoint two weeks previously?

Please note that a narrative written by Mrs. Guerrero, the office manager at Tri-City East Veterinary Hospital. She will report on an impromptu discussion with Mr. Phillip Ravesloot following Bassel's visit with Dr. Crisler. Mrs. Guerrero's narrative will also show that she dealt with a MasterCard dispute generated by Mr. Ravesloot on February 3, 2018.

Seven weeks after her visit to Dr. Crisler, Ms Hartman took Bassel to see Dr.

Heitman at Adobe Veterinary Clinic. According to her description, Dr. Heitman performed an examination similar to what I had done both December 18 and December 22. Apparently , Bassel did not "flinch or growl" for Dr. Heitman either. At no time did Dr. Heitman or Adobe request medical records. In her complaint, Ms. Hartman said that Dr Heitman stated "no blood test was needed since this was not Valley Fever related." Valley Fever cannot be diagnosed without a blood test and titer.

In Ms. Hartman's complaint she suggested that I knew "this was an injury that would heal on it's own." This is absolutely, not true. Ms. Hartman also claims that I "knowingly prescribed an allergy treatment plan just to make money." Again this is not true. In support of my diagnosis, please refer to Blackwell's Five Minute Veterinary Consult Fifth Edition page 130. The Boston Terrier is listed in the breed predilection for Atopy. Areas most commonly affected are interdigital spaces, carpal and tarsal area, and muzzle. "Atopy manifests as inflammatory chronically relapsing non-contagious and pruritic skin disease." My protocol for the management of allergies is based on knowledge, continuing education, and experience.

The case of Bassel Hartman is certainly not simple or uncomplicated. I believe Bassel is a dog that may require long term on-going veterinary care to meet his needs. He is large by Boston Terrier standards and that may present further musculoskeletal issues down the road. Are his allergies inhalant, contact, or food related? Could he have an underlying metabolic, infectious, or endocrine (thyroid, adrenal) issue? I firmly believe that diagnostic and baseline testing aid me in the diagnosis and treatments of my patients.

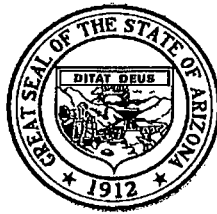
Bassel is a good dog. He is happy and full of life. I sincerely wish him well. My hope is that Bassel and Ms. Hartman can receive the veterinary care Bassel needs to have a good quality of life.

Veterinary medicine is not an exact science. I have been licensed by the Arizona State Veterinary Medical Board for over 32 years. My wife and I have owned Tri-City East Veterinary Hospital since July of 1989. I honor the Veterinary Oath to the best of my ability everyday. No one can definitely predict the outcome of any medical situation. We diligently give estimates and explanations. No treatments are done until the clients agree to the plan and sign the estimates. I schedule rechecks, and routinely consult and refer to various veterinary medical specialists to help ensure a more positive outcome.

Gregory D. Cromer DVM AZ 1645

Gregory D. Cromer DVM AZ1645

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
- GOVERNOR -



VICTORIA WHITMORE
- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -

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INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board

FROM: PM Investigative Committee: Donald Noah, D.V.M. - Chair
Amrit Rai, D.V.M.
Adam Almaraz
Christine Butkiewicz, D.V.M.
William Hamilton

STAFF PRESENT: Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT – Investigations
Victoria Whitmore, Executive Director.
Sunita Krishna, Assistant Attorney General

RE: Case: 18-97
Complainant(s): Jennifer Hartman
Respondent(s): Gregory Cromer, DVM (License: 1645)

SUMMARY:

Complaint Received at Board Office: 4/6/18
Committee Discussion: 8/7/18
Board IIR: 9/19/18

APPLICABLE STATUTES AND RULES:

Laws as Amended July 2014
(Salmon); Rules as Revised September
2013 (Yellow)

On December 18, 2017, "Bassel," a 3 ½ year-old male Boston Terrier was presented to Respondent for limping. After exam, Respondent felt the dog's soreness was due to allergies; a treatment plan was created and approved by Complainant. The dog was treated and discharged later that day.

The dog was presented two more times and allergy treatment continued based on symptoms and clinical signs.

Complainant obtained a second and third opinion where it was suspected the dog had a soft tissue injury and NSAIDS were dispensed.

Complainant contends Respondent was negligent in the care of the dog.

Complainant was noticed and appeared.
Respondent was noticed and did not appear.

The Committee reviewed medical records, testimony, and other documentation as described below:

- Complainant(s) narrative: *Jennifer Hartman*
- Respondent(s) narrative/medical record: *Gregory Cromer, DVM*
- Consulting Veterinarian(s) narrative/medical record: *Brown Road Animal Clinic and Adobe Veterinary Clinic*
- Witness(es) narrative: *Dutch Ravelsoot*

PROPOSED 'FINDINGS of FACT':

1. On December 18, 2017, the dog was presented to Respondent for limping on the right front paw. The medical record states that Complainant reported that the dog had injured the paw and was excessively licking right front paw. Complainant stated in her narrative that she advised Respondent that the dog never licks his paw.

2. Upon exam, the dog had a weight = 41.9 pounds, a temperature = 101.7 degrees, a heart rate = 106bpm and a respiration rate = 42rpm; mild ocular discharge. Respondent entered an addendum (date not indicated) that the dog had porphyrin stain, no pain on palpation of digits, metacarpals, carpals, elbow or shoulder. Respondent's assessment was atopy – allergies, pododermatitis, and toes swollen from licking. A treatment plan was presented and signed by Complainant. The dog stayed at the premise for a medicated bath and was discharged later that day after being administered the following:

- a. Kenalog 10mg/mL, 0.42mLs SQ; and
- b. Convenia 80mg/mL, 1.6mLs SQ.
- c. Recheck in 1 week.

3. On December 22, 2017, the dog was presented to Respondent for a recheck. Complainant reported that the dog's limp was worse; licking at paw. Upon exam, the dog had a weight = 40.6 pounds, a temperature = 100 degrees, a heart rate = 160bpm and a respiration rate = 60rpm. Respondent's assessment was the dog possibly had a sore foot from allergies; toes were swollen – suspected secondary infection, licking constantly. Respondent prepared a treatment plan to address his suspicion of uncontrolled allergies and Complainant approved the plan. The dog was discharged with the following:

- a. Apoquel 16mg, 14 tablet; give ½ tablet every 12 hours;
- b. Bene-Bac Pet Gel 15g; give 3 grams every 12 hours; and
- c. Ciprofloxacin 250mg, 14 tablets; give 1 tablet every 12 hours.

4. On December 30, 2017, the dog was presented to Respondent for a recheck. The dog was no longer limping, however his muzzle was hyperemic and his sclera was bilaterally injected. Upon exam, the dog had a weight = 40.6 pounds, a temperature = 101.8 degrees, a heart rate = 108 degrees, and a respiration rate = 50rpm. Respondent's plan was to try Cytopoint for long term allergy management. Complainant approved and the dog was treated with a 40mg and a 10mg Cytopoint injection. Respondent advised that Cytopoint treatment is labeled for use every 4 – 8 weeks. The dog was discharged.

5. On January 13, 2018, the dog was presented to Dr. Crisler at Brown Road Animal Clinic for a second opinion. Complainant reported that the dog has been limping off and on since December. Upon exam, Dr. Crisler noted a limp and laxity in the left carpus with mild pain on palpation. Complainant declined blood work and radiographs and the dog was discharged.

with Previcox 57mg chews, 10 tablets; give one tablet by mouth daily.

6. On March 3, 2018, the dog was presented to Dr. Heitman at Adobe Veterinary Clinic for a third opinion. Complainant reported that the dog was limping on the right front paw after exercise; was taking Previcox. Dr. Heitman examined the dog; no limping was found and no pain was elicited on palpation of shoulder, leg and paw. His assessment was possible soft tissue injury; rule-out cocci, OSA and other. Dr. Heitman recommended continuing NSAIDs when needed and to sedate for radiographs if dog gets worse.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

The Committee discussed that this case appeared to be a mixture of a musculoskeletal issue and dermatologic issue, both of which are common in this breed. There was a vast difference between what was reported by Respondent versus Complainant. Unfortunately, diagnostic testing was repeatedly declined. There was a lack of an obvious injury and the symptoms waxed and waned.

The symptoms presented at Respondent's were of the right front paw/leg and the symptoms at the consulting vet were of the left front leading the Committee to believe that there was some dermatologic issue going on with the right front paw. It was likely treated successfully with the allergy medications. The left front paw could have been a new injury due to the boisterous nature of the breed.

COMMITTEE'S PROPOSED CONCLUSIONS of LAW:

The Committee concluded that no violations of the *Veterinary Practice Act* occurred.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION:

Motion: It was moved and seconded the Board:

Dismiss this issue with no violation.

Vote: The motion was approved with a vote of 5 to 0.

The information contained in this report was obtained from the case file, which includes the complaint, the respondent's response, any consulting veterinarian or witness input, and any other sources used to gather information for the investigation.



Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT
Investigative Division